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Front Page Edit Page Other Page

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6

The Bundy Brothers, Lyndon Johnson's 'Human Computers'

McGeorge Once Called Brightest Man in America

Special to CHICAGO'S AMERICANS
WASHINGTON — When he made the decision to increase military and economic aid to South Viet Nam, President Johnson weighed the opinions of many advisers. But few were more influential than two extraordinary brothers who are not in the public eye.

They are Ivy Leaguers McGeorge Bundy, Johnson's special assistant for national security affairs, and William Putnam Bundy, assistant secretary of state for Far Eastern Affairs.

In different ways, both men are deeply involved in the Southeast Asian crisis which has confronted Johnson with his first great foreign policy challenge.

His Brain Works Like a Computer

The brothers come to their assignments well equipped. The late jurist Learned Hand once called Mac Bundy "the brightest man in America." Harvard was only slightly less carried away when it named him its dean of arts and sciences when he was only 34. And the verdict is



McGEORGE BUNDY
Analyzes quickly.

roughly the same here in Washington. In fact, McGeorge's Intelli-

gence is the most conspicuous thing about him. It crackles like a high tension wire. Like former Secretary of State Dean Acheson, he has a notoriously low tolerance for fools, and he is often accused of being arrogant or brusque. These qualities stem from the fact that he moves so swiftly in analyzing problems that he tends to knock down other thinkers along the way.

Bundy's performance has been so impressive, under both Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, that he is generally regarded as the man most likely to be named secretary of state if, and when, Dean Rusk steps down.

Bill Bundy, Mac's older brother, also has a remarkable mind. But he is more deliberate, more cautious, perhaps because he spent years in the CIA and the Pentagon before moving over to state. While Mac often reacts with intuitive speed, Bill carefully examines every angle of a problem and surveys the views of others be-

fore reaching his own conclusions. As Mac himself once put it, Bill has "a wide-angle view of the whole range of problems involved in an issue and brings a lot of experience to bear on them. He is a very effective and shrewd operator."

Never Try to Bypass Their Bosses

They are careful not to bypass Rusk when he should be consulted. "Mac and I have one strong element in common which we got from our father," Bill once remarked. "You serve the boss."

Indeed, all the available evidence suggests that Bundy, Rusk, and Defense Secretary McNamara work together remarkably well. Their different strong points tend to complement each other so that they make an effective team in dealing with complex military-political problems. And this is one reason Johnson has gone to such lengths to keep them.

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